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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 001682

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KNNP](#) [PARM](#) [IR](#) [IS](#) [GOI](#) [EXTERNAL](#)

SUBJECT: IVANOV TELLS ISRAELIS THAT RUSSIAN FUEL DELIVERY
TO IRAN COULD BE AS EARLY AS END OF 2005

REF: 04 TEL AVIV 6554 (NOTAL)

Classified By: Ambassador Daniel C. Kurtzer; Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

1. (C) According to Israeli officials, Russian National Security Adviser Igor Ivanov and MINATOM staff told the GOI on March 15 that Russian fuel could be delivered to Bushehr "as early as the end of 2005," although the Russians noted that a more likely date would be June 2006. Ariel "Eli" Levite, the deputy director of the Israel Atomic Energy Commission (IAEC), expressed concern to a visiting NSG delegation that the Russians had previously said that June 2006 would be the earliest possible delivery date (reftel).

2. (C) Levite told the NSG delegation, which included a DOE official, that the Russians had both "good news and bad news" during a March 15 discussion on the Iranian nuclear program. On the positive side, Levite said, the Russians insisted that obtaining guarantees on fuel deliveries and return of spent fuel are "major issues" for Moscow. He also described the Russians as generally helpful on the Iranian issue.

3. (C) On the negative side, Levite claimed that the Russians were reluctant to admit that Iran is a real problem. He called Russian rhetoric during the visit a "step backwards," complaining that they used phrases such as "if they are found to have a weapons program" when discussing Iranian issues. Levite said that the Russians had made clear that they would only consider supporting a move to take Iran to the UNSC if there is first a clear suspension agreement that Iran abrogates. He noted that the Russians also claimed that they are "heavily dependent" on the Islamic world, including Iran, for assistance in dealing with Chechnya. In addition, the Russians told Levite that they do not believe they have "an equally effective relationship" with the international community on nonproliferation issues, noting that the EU-3 is leading on Iran, the U.S. and UK in Libya, and China in North Korea. Levite stressed to the NSG delegation that the Russians have historically been proud of their non-proliferation efforts, but now feel that they are not being recognized as a leading participant in addressing current issues.

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KURTZER